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National Military Missions and Warwinning

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INTRODUCTION

America confronts a paradox after Desert Storm. On one hand the defense budget is declining as deficit reduction assumes a heightened national priority. On the other hand the armed forces are pulled and shaped by global geopolitical change that diffuses U.S. interests and alters the security environment. Though the likelihood of an Armageddon-like battle is slim now, from a historical and statistical standpoint the number of smaller conflicts could increase.

Is America's military sized and shaped for the times? Desert Storm answered many questions about America's relative military strength and the use of the military as an effective instrument of national power. But Desert Storm was the result of capabilities developed throughout the large Reagan-Era military build-up--the scope of which we aren't likely to see in the future. Fiscal realities drive defense drawdowns even as we reexamine military strategy, threats, and lessons learned from the first conflict of the post-cold war era.

This paper will discuss five areas that provide "new thought" for developing military strategy. First it examines the views of several great military strategists and relates them to today's technologically advanced environment. Second, it touches on events in the Iraq conflict that put the ideas of these strategists into action. Third, in the aftermath of Iraq, it defines the new "American way of war:" a combination of economic, diplomatic, and military instruments of power acceptable to the American public for future conflict. Next is a contemporary framework for viewing an enemy's strategic and operational centers of gravity, those vital areas of a country's power base that define its ability to wage war. This framework leads to the final section of the paper which addresses the merits of addressing military missions from a national perspective as a way to reconcile military strategy and requirement with budgets.

PERSPECTIVES OF THE GREAT STRATEGISTS

Clausewitz once said that war was an extension of politics by other means, but his vision of war focused primarily on the actual clashing of men on the battlefield as the determinant that would change the political will of one's enemy. During his time, armies in the field defined a nation's strength. There was little national infrastructure, relatively little technological development, few industries of national significance, and the people of a country were many times isolated from the battlefield. The army was usually the singular center of gravity in conflict.

Victory in war today still focuses on imposing your will on the political structure of another country. Military forces must have the capability to paralyze an enemy to the degree necessary to realize political goals. But attacking fielded armies might not be the only way or the best way to reach this goal; attacking critical parts of an enemy's economic, political, and military power base might force compliance with more efficiency and with greater popular and political acceptance within our own country.

This thought relates to another aspect of Clausewitz's philosophy "war is an extension of politics." Equal in importance to imposing your political will over an enemy is the political environment within one's own country. Public consensus is a vital determinant in how a nation plans its military strategy and how it eventually wages war. Desert Storm ingrained in the American political psyche that when and if conflict is necessary again, it can be done with quick action, few casualties, and decisiveness.

Later theorists like Giulio Douhet and Billy Mitchell understood the profound influence aircraft can have on the outcome of operations and their contributions helped change the nature of warfighting. Within today's high-technology world, broad new lessons that apply to the development of overall military strategy can be found within their airpower thinking.

In the early 1900s, Douhet believed aircraft altered the fundamental character of warfare. In his words, "by conquering the command of the air, the speed, mobility, and lethality of airplanes could decisively carry the battle to the very heart of an enemy." It would be possible to invade the enemy's territory without first breaking through his defensive lines. Wars until this time had been fought in areas isolated from the populace. With the advent of airpower, economy, industry, and people could be threatened from any distance.

Brigadier General Billy Mitchell carried on the crusade for airpower. He believed the impending aeronautical era would bring a "different" kind of war with quick and lasting results. Air forces could gain control of the air and then attack centers of production, means of transportation, agricultural areas, ports, shipping, and other means of waging war. After destroying their internal ability to wage war, the enemy would capitulate.

Douhet and Mitchell focused their writing on the capability offered by airpower; what they articulated was the first modern day marriage of high technology, not just airpower, to strategic and operational level warfare. They

realized that fighting a war at these levels could paralyze or destroy an enemy's capability to wage war and thereby allow our country to realize political goals.

IRAQ

On Saturday, April 6, 1991, Iraq accepted the U.N. Security council's tough resolution formally ending the Persian Gulf War in exchange for agreement to give up all weapons of mass destruction and pay damages for its seven month occupation of Kuwait. Iraqi leadership complained of the harshness of terms, but stated "we find ourselves facing only one choice: to accept this resolution."

What were the strengths of this international effort that produced such quick and decisive success? First, the political climate was conducive to success. President Bush mounted the most comprehensive economic and diplomatic effort in modern memory and built a world-wide coalition to fight Iraq's aggression. He was committed to achieve four objectives outlined to the world on August 7, 1990. He first proposed diplomatic resolutions and economic sanctions. After they failed, military objectives and strategy were developed to match his political and national objectives.

Second, a comprehensive campaign plan was developed that focused on strategic and operational level objectives designed to defeat the Iraqi leadership and army without the heavy allied casualties associated with an immediate ground assault on the Iraqi army.

Third, the concept of operations was to establish complete air supremacy while conducting powerful attacks on Iraq's strategic centers of gravity--those areas vital to their ability to wage war as a country. Areas such as telecommunications, command and control, nuclear, chemical, and biological weapon production and storage, oil distribution, and electric generating capacity were attacked; this brought life in the country to a virtual standstill. Follow-on attacks paralyzed production and infrastructure and gradually turned much of the military and civilian population against the occupation of Kuwait. All this was done via technology, with an absolute minimum of civilian Iraqi casualties and collateral damage.

Was short-term strategic and operational warfare a success? The real answer may lie with Iraqi senior level prisoners who were captured in the final stages of the war. One stated that in his view the Allied ground campaign was not necessary. His soldiers were on starvation rations and would have been forced to withdraw from the theater within days. Iraq's economy, transportation,

communications, and normal government functions were paralyzed. The Iraqi military was immobilized; in fact, commanders couldn't even get to cease-fire talks without our permission. Even more important, the country was (and still is) totally unable to reconstitute its economy and infrastructure without massive help.

The result: strategic and operational level warfare made the fourth largest army and the sixth largest air force in the world impotent. It achieved objectives quickly and decisively with very low Allied losses. These results provide the basis for a new look at American expectations of future wars--the antithesis of the protracted, ill-defined, gradualist approach to war like Vietnam.

THE AMERICAN WAY OF WAR TODAY

Since World War II, American military planning and strategy has been driven by the Soviet strategic nuclear and conventional threat. During this time the majority of U.S. political, diplomatic, and military energy was focused either directly or indirectly on the Soviet Union. This changed when the cold war ended.

A large standing military, defense budgets that occupy 6-7% of the GNP, and large Service acquisition budgets are things of the past. Replacing these will be a much smaller, highly flexible, high-technology military structure combined with a changed American political awareness about war itself.

The American way of war in the future will be based on carefully articulated principles. First, Americans will view participation in war only in relation to interests vital to the U.S. or our Allies. Military goals will be directly tied to political goals. Second, diplomatic and economic instruments of national power will be exhausted before military force will be brought to bear. Third, coalition warfare will be the norm; what threatens America's vital interests will likely threaten other's vital interests as well. Finally, the Soviet Union is the single nation in the world that presents a potentially fatal threat to the United States because of its nuclear forces. Arguably, other than Korea, no country in the world can actually force the U.S. to enter war; they can threaten our interests and make us mad, but they cannot threaten the existence of our country. Therefore, any war that America enters, it enters as an option, and at the time and place of its choosing.

The characteristics of American war have also changed. Rather than gradualism and politically driven restraint, forces, when finally committed, will be unleashed with clear national and military objectives. They will be guided by a warwinning strategy as opposed to a warfighting strategy. Military campaigns will be quick, decisive, low casualty, high technology events that will overwhelm an

too broad

enemy. The challenge is to design a military strategy and force structure based on the new American way of war. Central to warwinning is a different approach to viewing enemy vulnerabilities.

CENTERS OF GRAVITY

Contemporary thought about "centers of gravity"--an enemy's sources of national strength and power--hinges on understanding the different levels from which war can be waged: the strategic level, the operational level, and the tactical level.

The strategic level consists of the key national assets that give a country power. It also consists of those parts of a state which are most essential to a nation's ability to wage war. The decision to go to war or not is also made at the strategic level. From this perspective, this level concerns not only the overall planning and conduct of the war, but the approximate forces and resources that will be made available. This level includes the civilian and/or military leadership, key production capabilities essential to a country's economic, political, and military instruments of power, infrastructure that provides the basis for production and services, a country's civilian and military population and its contribution to national power, and finally the countries combined military sources of power.

The operational level focus is below the strategic level and is primarily concerned with how a nation can use its strategic level assets and military forces to achieve its political, economic, or military goals. This is where actual plans are devised for employment of forces. Plans made at the operational level are integrally tied to the strategic level. Essential parts of an enemy's operational level structure would be military leadership, key food, fuel, and supply capabilities related to military forces and essential parts of the civil populace, transportation infrastructure essential to supplying military forces, the morale and capabilities of the populace, and finally the fielded military forces as a whole.

The tactical level of war is where opposing forces actually meet with specific objectives that must be accomplished on the battlefield. Representative actions in the tactical level of warfare might be the physical engagement of opposing fighters or the taking of a specific objective by a small unit of army troops. The tactical level of war represents the lowest level of conflict. Historically, battles fought on the tactical level tend to be high intensity, high casualty, and lengthy.

Viewing the levels of war from an "American way of war" perspective helps redirect the type of military strategy that can be used to create real effect upon the

political will of an enemy. The idea that technology can put an enemy's strategic and operational level assets at total risk could, in many instances, mean limiting tactical level conflict.

In World War II, for instance, it took about 4500 B-17 sorties and about 9000 bombs to destroy a precise target like a bridge or industrial complex. In the latter stages of Vietnam, it took on the order of 30 delivered weapons to achieve the same. In Iraq, it took only one aircraft with one bomb. The results of high-technology war today are decisive, lethal, and quick.

In Iraq, for instance, U.S. forces used this precision to destroy the power generating capacity of the country within the first days--a strategic-level national asset. Production of goods and services, distribution of food, food-processing, telecommunications, command and control, and basic civilian services were disrupted successfully. But what about another opponent in the future?

According to Col. John Warden, the Air Force's Deputy Director for Warfighting, the actual sources of an enemy's strength are much the same, regardless of the enemy. From a strategic level, Col. Warden believes it is useful to view enemy power from a framework with centers of gravity listed in order of importance.

Strategic Centers of Gravity

1. Leadership	Political and/or military leadership of a country
2. Key production	Economic power of a nation in terms of its industrial complex; also refers to the economic, political, and military value of these assets
3. Infrastructure	Capability to distribute key products of the industrial complex
4. Population	Civilian and military populace and their capability and will to carry out the direction of leadership
5. Military forces	Military capability of the enemy

Defeating an enemy may require only rendering its leadership ineffective or it might be that destroying a critical industry or infrastructure could render both the leadership, the populace, and the military forces ineffective.

*Is this from
Warden?*

*) attacking
population
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not
American
way of
war*

Col Warden also believes that viewing an additional conceptual framework of operational level centers of gravity expands the possibilities.

Operational Centers of Gravity

1. Military leadership	The top warplanning and warfighting leadership of the military forces
2. Key supplies, food, and water	Items necessary for military forces to fight
3. Transportation Infrastructure	Capability to transport goods and services to support military forces and population; includes vehicles, trains, aircraft, roads, and bridges, etc.
4. Population and military troops	Morale and capability to carry out their mission
5. Fielded Forces	Capability of military forces to fight

What is
The power
represented

To effectively plan to fight a potential enemy, it is important to understand conceptually what empowers the enemy. If it is possible to conceptualize the centers of gravity that give an enemy strength, as Col Warden does in the above schemes, it is then possible to think and plan more clearly and identify key vulnerabilities.

The next step to winning within the American way of war is integrating high technologies, maximum efficiency, and strategic and operational level centers of gravity into military strategy.

MILITARY MISSIONS: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Forcing the hand of an enemy at the strategic and operational levels of war could bypass high cost tactical level warfare altogether--or, at the very least, keep a war short. Developing such a strategy depends, in my view, on articulating the missions of our separate military services from a national perspective.

Currently each service is charged with training and equipping forces to be placed into action either separately or together under the command of a warfighting Commander-in-Chief (CinC). CinCs and CinC war plans tend to have a tactical focus because they plan military actions with forces and capabilities available from the services today.

Only in recent times have CinCs had a significant input to the capabilities each service provides through inputs into the Program Objective Memorandum (POM) process. However, the Services still control and advocate their procurement to support the broad mission areas they are assigned as separate Services.

In the future, systems requirements and force structures should be measured by the warwinning capability each provides to overall military capability. They should perform tasks that allow CinCs to achieve objectives that support his strategy; the CinC's strategy should underwrite the national security strategy of our country.

To build a cost-effective military without sacrificing overall capability, the link between national military strategy and our military fighting forces should be absolute and systems and force structure that are not cost effective in terms of the contribution they make should not be sustained. A look at the broad mission areas of our armed services provides an interesting insight to overlapping mission responsibilities.

Service Mission Areas

NAVY/ MARINES	ARMY	AIR FORCE
Power Projection	Provide Combat Ready Ground Forces (Power Projection)	Strategic Deterrence
Sea Control	Forward Presence	Power Projection
Amphibious Operations	Provide Forces Able to Reinforce Forward-Deployed and Contingency Forces	Global Mobility Forces
Strategic Sealift	Disaster Relief, Emergency Assistance, Interdiction of Drugs	Controlling the "High Ground" through space and Airborne Assets
Strategic Deterrence	Peacekeeping, Security Assistance, Army-to-Army Initiatives	Project influence through use of Equipment, Training, Humanitarian Aid

As an example of a lack of service integration, the sea control mission of the Navy has long required huge capital investment in surface ships, submarines, and weapons designed to control the high seas that cover almost 70% of the earth's surface--a monumental task. However, working together with naval forces, one long range Air Force aircraft integrated with space assets and advanced command, control, and communications assets, refueled by aerial tankers and armed with advanced weaponry, has the capability to surveil one million square miles of ocean in only one mission. Advanced long-range stealth airborne assets could actually put any surface navy in the world at great risk and perform much of the sea control mission in concert with smaller naval forces. With the lack of a projected major naval threat from any country in the world today, it might be time to integrate capabilities between services to perform this as a national mission.

U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) may be the most successful organization designed to articulate a national mission for the military services of the U.S. The result has been a clear focus on the types of systems needed to project military forces around the globe from a national perspective, rather than solely from a service perspective. The synergy of forces and strategic and operational level contribution was essential to effective operations in Operation Desert Shield.

Strategic deterrence is another example of a broad mission area that overlaps. The Air Force advocates the aircraft and ICBM legs of the Strategic Triad and the Navy advocates the submarine based strategic missile force. A changed nuclear threat combined with fiscal tightening has some calling for a new single, unified command for strategic deterrence and warfighting--a clear articulation of a broad mission area at a national level.

A new focus on national military missions could also heighten the role of the CinC in the procurement process allowing him to focus on new systems and the capabilities they offer to perform missions across Service lines. A few examples illustrate the point.

Stealth fighters during the Iraq war accounted for only 2 1/2% of the total combat aircraft in theater but their operational effectiveness allowed them to cover over 30% over the high-threat target base--with over 90% effectiveness.¹⁸ Air Force B-2s operating in concert with the Navy can more than double the combat power of an entire carrier battle group and they can deliver this power with unprecedented surprise and flexibility. One F-15E Wing in only 1 1/2 days can yield more combat power than the entire multi-year procurement of the Army's Tactical Missile System--at well over twice the range and 10 times the accuracy or

better--and it can continue to support Army operations like this day after day. A carrier battle group equipped with long-range, high-precision, stealth aircraft could be major answer to power projection against the projected threats of the next decades. Decreasing budgets make synergism of capabilities across service lines essential.

So the question arises, is it possible to measure each Service's contribution to national missions rather than our service-oriented philosophy today? Further, is it possible to build a military strategy that focuses on defeating an enemy at the strategic and operational levels of war by using the forces that make the most effective contribution to national broad mission areas? Realizing that national military strategy must provide for power projection, collective security, maritime and aerospace superiority, security assistance, arms control, and technological superiority, a representative broad national mission statement is depicted below.

Broad National Missions

Strategic Nuclear Deterrence and Warfighting

 Air Superiority

 Sea Superiority

 Strategic Defense

 Military Power Projection and Presence

 Strategic and Operational Level Interdiction

 Lift

From a national perspective, a CinC could focus on which force structure combination makes the biggest contribution towards defeating a potential threat. High technology systems could be easily integrated across service lines and commonality and interoperability enhanced. Costly, less-effective systems and capabilities could be scrapped. Services would still train and equip forces, but they would do so based on their contribution to broad national mission areas rather than specific service missions.

A spin-off from national service missions might well be the restructuring of the present CinC command structure into one more streamlined and more responsive to the American way of war, shrinking budgets, and future threats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First, continued study of great strategists and theorists is essential--but this study should be integrated into today's high-technology world. We should also

integrate thinking from contemporary strategists such as Col John Warden and others who have provided strategic and operational level thought to the large body of tactical level information available from the past.

Second, we should learn from our experiences in the Iraq war to prepare for the next conflict. We should realize, however, that it cannot be our roadmap; potential opponents will learn from it as well. We should move beyond Iraq by capitalizing on our ability to integrate our continued technological superiority with strategic and operational thought.

Third, we should articulate military missions from a national perspective in an effort to build a force based on a military strategy of strategic and operational level warwinning. This represents the future American way of war. Services would still have the role of training and equipping forces, but the linkage between national military strategy, CinC strategy, operational objectives, and requirements should be absolute.

Fourth, each CinC needs the staff and the analytical ability to look at future threats from a strategic, operational, and tactical level; this perspective will help the CinC provide stronger input into the requirements process across services. It will also allow the CinC to compare capabilities across service lines.

CONCLUSION

The struggle to match military strategy and capabilities to declining budgets is complicated in a rapidly changing world. What remains clear is that streamlining and increasing the efficiency of military planning and systems is essential to our future. Programs must be scrutinized from top to bottom for their contribution to the CinC warwinning requirements. Viewing military missions from a national perspective provides the framework for doing this planning...and it allows America to exploit its technological edge by building forces that can defeat any country's ability to wage war. It also ties our future military strategy to many of the basic ideas of great strategists in history.

Maximizing U.S. national military capabilities in tomorrow's world may also, in the words of a great American general, allow us to become so powerful that we might bypass future conflict altogether.

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Note: Numerous Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report Magazine articles were used as background between October 1990 and April 1991. Additionally, numerous Washington Post articles on diplomacy and Presidential and Congressional actions were useful as background in writing the section entitles "The American Way of War."